

[From the Southern Literary Messenger.]

THE WAGONER.

By St. Leger L. Carter, of Virginia.

They never thought if I were asked

Whom I loved most, I should lightly take

What one I thought most lightly took

Of my own love, I should have said

I'd love a mountain boy,

And drive a big team, Wo, boy!

Wo, boy! I'd cry,

And lightly fly

Into my saddle seat;

My rein I'd slack—

My whip I'd crack—

What music is so sweet!

Six black, I'd drive, of ample chest,

All carrying big, heavy loads,

All harness'd tight, and gaily drest

In winkers tip'd with red—

Oh, yes, I'd be a mountain boy,

And drive a team I'd drive, Wo, boy!

Wo, boy! I'd cry,

And lightly fly

Into my saddle seat;

My rein I'd slack—

My whip I'd crack—

What music is so sweet!

My bells would tinkle, tinkle, ling,

Beneath each bear skin cap;

And as I saw them swing and swing,

I'd be the merriest chap—

Yes, then I'd be a mountain boy,

And drive a jingling team, Wo, boy!

Wo, boy! I'd cry—

My words would fly

Each horse would prick his ear;

With tighthen'd reins

My lurching team

Would move in its career.

The golden sparks, you'd see them spring

Beneath my horse's truss;

And as I saw them with string

Of blue or darning red—

So does, you know, the mountain boy,

Who drives a dashing team, Wo, boy!

Wo, boy! I'd cry—

Each horse's eye

Would seem to burn;

With lifted head

And nostril spread

They'd seem the earth to spurn.

They'd clump the bit, and fling the foam,

As on they dragged my load;

And I would think of distant home,

And while upon the road—

Oh, would I were a mountain boy—

I'd drive a big horse team, Wo, boy!

Wo, boy! I'd cry—

Now by you sky

I'd swear drive those steeds

Than win renown,

Or wear a crown

Won by victorious deeds!

For crowns oft press the languid head,

And health the weaker slumbers;

And victory, trampling on the dead,

My yoke doth gild the same—

Seek them who will, they have no joys

For mountain lads, and wagon-boys.

From Porter's Spirit of the Times.

HINTS TO PURCHASERS OF HORSES.

It is not to be supposed that any description

can be written, or any rule laid down,

that will give the keen, discriminating eye,

the fine perceptions with regard to form

and motion, the rapid, searching glance at

defects, that the true and practised horse-

man seems to realize at the first view, en-

abling him to form a tolerably correct judg-

ment of the value of an animal almost as

soon as he sees it; some suggestions, how-

ever, can be made, which will aid ordinary

purchasers.

Before a man attempts to purchase a

horse, he should first determine for himself

what kind of horse he requires, both as to

size and general qualities, since the value

of the horse to his owner depends very

much on his adaptation to the kind of busi-

ness required of him. As to size, we think

all experience shows that medium size is

the best for ordinary use; such horses we

shall find possessed of the most compact

forms, the most rugged constitutions, the

most nimble, easy, and graceful motions.

Though it is very true that a good horse

may have a bad color, yet, as a bad color

is to some, perhaps most buyers, a serious

objection, such should be avoided. White,

light gray, light sorrel, cream colored, and

spotted, are the objectionable, and should

be avoided. Bay, chestnut, black, and dark

brown are almost universally esteemed the

best, and horses of these colors are worth

more in every market than horses of the

colors before named.

When the purchaser is unaccustomed to

horses, we would advise him, after having

determined what kind of a horse he wants,

to engage some one to assist him who has

had more experience, especially if he is

about to purchase of a stranger; for in the

latter case, he will not only be liable to

misjudge as to the justness of the animal's

proportions, but also to his soundness and

value, for a vast many faults and defects

may be artfully concealed from the inexpe-

rienced eye, and sometimes even from

the closest and most intelligent exami-

nation.

If, however, the purchaser can avail him-

self of no such assistance, or chooses to trust

to his own judgment, he cannot be too cau-

tious or circumspect. When you enter the

stable, observe carefully the way the owner

approaches his horse; if, as soon as he comes

within hearing, he speaks to him in a loud,

sharp voice, that frightens the horse sping

up in his stall as if frightened, look out for

some defect in his limbs. If much time, if

he is seen when he is moved, but if it is

very slight, you may not notice it. If he

comes up to the horse very carefully, and

seems a little cautious about going into the

stall where he is, you may justly suspect he

is not perfectly kind and pleasant tempered.

If he approaches the horse in an easy, care-

less, but quiet way, you may reasonably ex-

pect that the horse has no such vices to

hide, and you will not suspect him of lame-

ness, though it should not prevent your

watching carefully every motion of his

limbs to see if you can detect it. Mark how

the horse stands, how he is hitched, and

what kind of a halter he has on. If he

is fastened with more than ordinary care,

see if you can observe any signs of his having

attempted to untie his halter with his teeth.

If the halter is fastened very tight round

the throat, he may have a trick of slipping

it off, or he may be a cribber. A large

strap, buckled close round the throat, will

often prevent cribbing.

You will sometimes observe unsoundness;

and it is, at all events, a very bad habit, that

materially injures the sale of a horse. If

the manger shows signs of being bitten by

the horse, do not purchase the animal until

you have seen him with the teeth of an

old "cribler" almost invariably show signs

of this habit, being much worn on the out-

er edge, but in young horses it will not be

noticed. When the horse is turned out of

his stall and faces the light, observe whether

he shivers it, and partially closes his

eyes; if so, his eyes are weak; if, on the con-

trary, he looks boldly about, with a bright

and lively expression, his eyes are not only

good, but you may infer that he is both

spirited and tractable. Examine the head

carefully. If it is thoroughly good, light,

lean, and graceful, with tapering, sharp-

pointed ears, ever moving, restless, the whole

firm, the nostrils large, and the muzzle

well set upon the neck, you may be pretty

sure that it belongs to a good horse.

If the eyes are not bright and lively, it

should be carefully examined, especially if

the animal is from the Western or South-

ern States, where diseases of the eyes are

more common than at the North or East.

Sometimes the eye will look very natural,

and the horse appear bright and well, yet

be perfectly blind. If the horse is entirely

blind you may easily detect it, for though

some horses move about very easily and

handily when perfectly blind, you will soon

notice the defect, if you watch him and suf-

fer him to move about freely. If you are

suspicious that, although not entirely blind,

his sight is defective, you may determine it

by passing some small object, like a stick

of hay, rapidly before the eye, and at a

short distance from it, taking care that the

substance be not large enough to create any

perceptible motion of the atmosphere, for a

blind horse will wink at the least unnatural

current of air.

The general appearance of the head is a

pretty sure index of the age of the animal,

and the inexperienced buyer will do well

to rely as much upon this general appear-

ance, as upon the appearance of the teeth;

for with a saw and a fring iron, old teeth

may be made to resemble so closely those

of a young horse, as to deceive even pretty

good judges. In the old horse the eyes are

usually a little sunken, and the hollows

over the eyes are deepened, the lips are less

firm and close, and the mouth shows the

long use of the bit.

If the head is satisfactory, next examine

the legs. See if they are not too long, are

wide, flat, bony, and free from flesh below

the knees and hocks. When the muscles

are well developed, and stand well out from

the bone, and are free from any fat or meat,

they can be distinctly traced by the eye

through the skin. See that the horse stands

squarely and equally upon them, that they

are neither stretched too far apart nor gath-

ered too much under him. Examine closely

whether there be any unnatural enlarge-

ment or bunches on either leg. If none

can be detected by the eye, then pass the

half-dressed hand carefully down each one,

pressing the leg moderately, to determine

whether there are any bunches or scars con-

cealed by the hair.

Look carefully at the hocks for spavins,

curbs or thoroughpins; for although the lat-

ter do not constitute unsoundness, yet they

are objectionable. Pass the hand carefully

down the back sinews to detect any un-

evenness in the muscle. If any little bunch-

es are found, or the cord is anywhere en-

larged, examine carefully for any scar that

may indicate the injury was an external

one. If there are no signs of any such in-

jury, and especially if the muscle at this

point feel sore, reject the animal. The back

sinews have been strained, if not ruptured,

and there is little chance that he will ever

be able to endure hard service. Search for

bunches on the inside of the fetlock; if you

find them, or scars, you will attribute them

to the horse's cutting. If the scars are old,

and the horse being in very high flesh, yet

travels very close, it will be wise to reject

him, for in ordinary flesh he will be likely

to cut, and this is one of the most unpleas-

ant defects in the horse, and one that is very

difficult to remedy. Press the hand closely

and carefully around the pastern, for ring

bone, or clings, that are just commen-

cing to form, will be detected more easily

by the hand than the eye; this is the more

important, as ringbone is one of the worst

kind of unsoundness, and the horse may

not at all times, and in all instances, be

sufficiently lame to enable the buyer to de-

tect it.

The knees are often too carelessly exam-

ined. It is not enough that there is no

trembling in the joint, that it shuts back

well, and is well shaped. If there are any

bunches, hard or soft, or any scars in front,

it is a pretty sure sign that the horse is a

stumbler, and is unsafe. Just below the

knees and upon the inside of the leg look

for splints; if small and removed from the

joint, they may in no way affect the useful-

ness of the animal, but they are unsightly

and objectionable.

The feet require the closest scrutiny. Re-

ject horses that have split or flat hoofs, as

they will be fit only for slow work. Where

the feet are high and narrow at the heels,

it is a serious objection, as such feet are

liable to founder and other diseases. The

legs and feet proving satisfactory thus far, take

a look at the body. If the ribs are round,

the back short, and his wind good, little

more need be required.

To determine the soundness of the wind

is sometimes difficult, especially if the horse

is in high condition and has been dieted

and medicated with the view of concealing

some defect in it. The best way to deter-

mine this is to make him trot briskly about

one hundred rods, and as soon as he has

done this let him stand perfectly still and

watch his breathing. If he breathes easily,

and without any apparent effort, and espe-

cially if, as soon as he stops, he draws one

or two long breaths that fill the lungs to

their utmost capacity without any appear-

ance of distress, his wind may be pronoun-

ced good; but if there is the least evi-

dence of painful respiration, or catching for

breath, something is wrong, and the animal should